in consultation with them, under the Scheme 'Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits'. Project proposals received from the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, compliant with extant guidelines, are approved and funds released subject to availability.

Supply of gas through pipelines in the country

*562. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to supply cooking gas to consumers through pipelines in the country, particularly in Jyotiba Phule Nagar and Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the details of the funds sanctioned/spent so far and the time schedule fixed for the completion of the scheme;

(d) the expected number of consumers to be benefited under this scheme;

(e) whether gas cylinders are likely to be taken from the consumers covered under the scheme; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) Piped Natural Gas (PNG) is being supplied to domestic customers in Delhi, Noida, Mumbai and its suburbs, Agartala in Tripura and in various cities in Gujarat and Assam. As on 1 January, 2008, it is reported that PNG is being supplied to 802217 domestic consumers. The supply to these cities has been possible because of proximity to sources of gas and trunk gas pipelines. However, City Gas Distribution project has not been implemented in Jyotiba Phule Nagar and Moradabad, U.P.

Government does not sanction/earmark funds for this purpose. However, in order to promote investment from public as well as private sector for laying trunk natural gas pipelines and city/local natural gas distribution networks throughout the country, the Government of India has enacted 'The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006' and notified the 'Policy for Development of Natural Gas Pipelines and City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks'.

Providing of PNG facilities depends upon availability of gas, setting up of necessary infrastructure and economic viability.

(e) and (f) The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies have been advised by Government to take measures to block connections of domestic LPG customers who are covered by PNG.

Requirement of chartered accountants

†*563. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of CORPORATE AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of chartered accountants required in the country at present;

(b) the total number of educational institutions which provide education in the discipline of chartered accountancy in the country at present and the total number of seats in these institutions;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the action being taken by Government to provide education for the discipline of chartered accountancy as per demand in the country; and

(d) if not, whether Government would take action to ensure availability of chartered accountants as per demand?

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA): (a) to (d) Precise estimates of the number of chartered accountants required in the country at any given time are not available. The requirement for persons having such qualification depends upon the demand for accountancy and audit services in the economy and may vary from time to time.

2. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India established under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, is presently the only Institute which imparts instruction in chartered accountancy courses in the country. There is no prescribed limit of number of seats in the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Any eligible student who wishes to pursue the chartered accountancy course can join the course.

3. The Institute has recently taken up the following measures to enhance the availability of chartered accountants:—

(i) Introduction of a new scheme of education in 2006 to facilitate a higher number of students to join the chartered accountancy course.

(ii) Enhancing training opportunities for articled assistants, which is a pre-requisite for the chartered accountancy course.

Upgradation of Jharsuguda Airstrip

*564. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the progress of converting Jharsuguda Airstrip into a regular airport; and

(b) the detailed action plan by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), projected investment and the expected date of completion of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) On request from the State Government of Orissa, the existing airport at Jharsuguda is proposed to be developed for scheduled flight operations for which the State Government has been requested to provide 815 acres of land under a Memorandum of Undertakings (MoU). The response of the State Government is awaited.

Investment in R & D activities

*565. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the investment both in amount as well as in percentage in the Research and Development (R&D) activities of various Public Sector Undertakings and institutes under the Ministry;

(b) whether it is a fact that investment in R & D is far below the level required for a country aspiring to emerge as economic super power;